

JOHN PINTARD, FOUNDER OF THE  
NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 3, 1901,

BY

GENERAL JAMES GRANT WILSON



NEW YORK:  
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY  
1902

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p56 1902



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are members, *ex-officio*, of the Executive Committee.]





JOHN PINTARD.

From the Original Portrait,  
Painted for the New York Historical Society, 1816,  
By John Trumbull.



AT a stated meeting of THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in its Hall, on Tuesday evening, December 3d, 1901 :

General JAMES GRANT WILSON read the paper of the evening, entitled : " John Pintard, Founder of the New York Historical Society."

On its conclusion Mr. A. V. W. Van Vechten offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Society be presented to General Wilson for his interesting and appreciative sketch of John Pintard, Founder of this Society, and that a copy be requested for publication.

Extract from the minutes.

SYDNEY H. CARNEY, JR.,  
*Recording Secretary.*



## JOHN PINTARD, FOUNDER OF THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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In the ancient capital of Brittany, Henry the Fourth of France signed the ever-memorable Treaty of Nantes, April 13th, 1598, and eighty-seven years later it was revoked by Louis the Fourteenth, the most brilliant, as well as despotic, of French monarchs. On the 22d of October, 1684, the Act of Revocation was published. It was the death-knell of the Huguenots,<sup>1</sup> as the Calvinists

<sup>1</sup> The etymology is uncertain. Henault, in his "History of France," says: "Some derive Huguenot from John Hus, as much as to say '*les guenons de Hus*,' the apes of Hus. Others from Hugo Capet, the Huguenots defending the right of his descendants to the crown against the house of Guise, who pretended to be descended from Charlemagne. There are some who deduce it from Hugh the Sacramentarian, who taught the same doctrine as Calvin in the reign of Charles Fourth. Others derive it from the harangue of a German, who, being taken and interrogated by the Cardinal of Loraine concerning the conspiracy of Amboise, stopped short in his harangue, which began with these words, '*Huc nos venimus*,' we are come hither; and the courtiers, not understanding Latin, said to one another, 'These fellows are from Huc nos.' Pasquier relates that the common people at Tours were persuaded that a hobgoblin, or night spirit, called King Hugo, ran about the town at night; and as the Reformed assembled in the night to perform their devotions, from thence they were called Huguenots, as much as to say the disciples of King Hugo; and this opinion appears the most plausible. Others affirm it was owing to their meeting near the gate called Hugon. Others, in fine, and, among the rest, M. Voltaire, derive it from the Eidge-

were called. A conservative estimate of all the Huguenots who emigrated before, and after, the Revocation, and including those who were slaughtered on their native soil, is probably not less than half a million. Among the fugitives driven from the fair fields of France by the Revocation of the Edict, and by the bitter persecutions which preceded that barbarous Jesuit Edict, were many who fled, as the Pilgrim Fathers had done, to Holland ; others sought refuge in Switzerland, England, and the New World. Their descendants were such men as John Bayard, Elias Boudinot, James Bowdoin, Peter Faneuil, Bishops De Lancey and Provoost, John Pintard, and, greatest of them all, Chief Justice Jay, whose reputation as a sincere patriot was second only to that of Washington. It was of this noble son of New York that Webster beautifully said, " When the spotless ermine of the judicial robe fell on John Jay, it touched nothing less spotless than itself." The expatriated French Huguenots were heroes of the highest type, and worthy peers of that noble band of English emigrants who landed on Plymouth Rock, early in the Seventeenth Century. The intermarriage of these two races, has given to our country, some of her

nossen of Geneva. There had been two parties for some time in that city ; one of the Protestants, and the other of the Roman Catholics. The former were called Egnots from the German word *Eidgenossen*, allied by oath ; and at length triumphed over the latter. Hence the French Protestants, who were before styled Lutherans, began to be distinguished by the name of Egnots, which, by corruption, was changed into that of Huguenots."

noblest citizens. To mention a single instance, I may be permitted to name my friend Robert C. Winthrop, who was so long the honored President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and whose successor, Charles Francis Adams, so acceptably occupied this platform a fortnight ago.

In the year 1696, William Bradford reprinted in New York with some alterations, an ancient French work—“*Le Trésor des Consolations Divines et Humaines*,” the cost of which was borne by Antoine Pintard, a Huguenot native of Rochelle, from which city he escaped with his family and came to this country in 1695, settling in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. They resided for many years in this city. He was the ancestor of the chief founder of this Society, who is the subject of the paper to which your attention is now invited. Three generations of John Pintards were prominent merchants of New York for nearly a century. The first John, second son of Antoine, the Rochelle emigrant, married Catherine Carrée, and was an Alderman of this city for ten years. In 1757 his second son John, Louis being the eldest, married a daughter of John Cannon, a wealthy New York merchant, also of a Huguenot family, still worthily represented by Col. Le Grand B. Cannon. The beautiful Mrs. Pintard died soon after giving birth to a son, born 18 May, 1759. Her husband speedily followed her, dying during the succeeding year at Port-au-Prince, while on a voyage in one of his own vessels, of which he



was both Captain and Supercargo. After the death of his parents, the orphan boy John was, in 1760, adopted by his uncle Lewis Pintard, the only father he ever knew, who for that reason is entitled to mention in this paper. He was born in this city in 1732, and early succeeded his father, John Pintard, in a large Shipping and Commission business with England and the East Indies. During the Revolutionary war he was Agent for American prisoners, and administered the scanty funds that Congress was able to supply, toward mitigating the sufferings of the captives, with economy and fidelity, for which he received the thanks of General Washington. After the war, Mr. Pintard was the chief importer of Madeira wine into the United States, and exporter of flaxseed to Ireland, but owing to the failure of his consignee in Dublin, his cargoes were seized and bills drawn to the amount of twenty thousand pounds, were returned protested. He then engaged in the importation of molasses and sugar from the West Indies, which he carried on successfully until the interference with American shipping by British cruisers in 1812, led to his retirement from business. He withdrew to Princeton, New Jersey, where he spent the last six years of his life. Mr. Pintard ranked as one of the merchant princes of his time, and was one of the incorporators of the Chamber of Commerce established by George the Third in 1770, and by the New York legislature in

1784. He married Susan Stockton, sister of Richard Stockton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey, and was connected with several of the leading families of the Country. Their daughter Martha, married Samuel Bayard, who was appointed by Washington to collect American Claims in England under the Jay Treaty. They spent the years 1794-97 in London, and during that period both Mr. and Mrs. Bayard kept diaries,<sup>1</sup> which have recently been published, and are exceedingly interesting reading. Burke and Fox and Pitt: Cornwallis, Garrick, and Wilberforce, were among the many prominent persons with whom they enjoyed intercourse during their four years' residence in England. A third son of the first John Pintard was a commissioned officer in the British Army, and with his regiment—the 25th—was engaged in the battle of Minden, and later in the Canadian campaign. At the beginning of the Revolutionary war Captain Pintard, who had been retired on half pay, was offered by his countrymen a commission as brigadier-general, and by the British the rank of major, but he declined both, saying that he would neither fight against his King, nor his Country. With many other members of his fam-

<sup>1</sup> "The Bayard Family of America and Judge Bayard's London Diary of 1795-96, An address delivered before the Huguenot Society of America, by Gen. James Grant Wilson, 17th of April, 1890." *Vide* Proceedings, vol. 2, p. 135, New York, 1891; also "The Journal of Martha Pintard Bayard, London, 1794-97, Edited by S. Bayard Dod," Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1894.

ily he was buried in the old French Churchyard in Pine Street. From thence all the remains were removed to a tomb prepared about 1830, by John Pintard, under the vestry-room of St. Clement's Church in Amity Street, where he was placed fourteen years later. Of this church his kinsman Dr. Lewis Pintard Bayard, son of his cousin Maria, was the Rector from its erection, until his death in 1840.

In an unpublished autobiography John Pintard, alluding to his father's death, says: "I thus became an orphan indeed. On this occasion my uncle Lewis Pintard took me to his home, and brought me up as his own child, carefully concealing from me that I was any other. He had married about a year before Miss Susan Stockton of New Jersey, a beautiful woman but of a very delicate constitution. She always treated me as her own child, and I am certain I loved her as if she had been my own mother. The death of my parents was first communicated to me when I was about six years old by my aunt Van Dam, whom I was taken to see when she lay on her death bed. I was kneeling at her bedside to receive her blessing when she told me that both of my parents were dead, and that the person who was bringing me up was my uncle, and not my father. I thought this so dreadful a secret, that when I reached home I closed the door of the nursery and cried myself asleep."

When ten years of age, John Pintard was sent

to the Rev. Leonard Cutting's School, at Hempstead, Long Island. He had married a connection of the Pintards, was an Episcopalian, and had charge of the parishes of Hempstead and Oyster Bay. Cadwallader C. Colden and Samuel L. Mitchell were among Mr. Cutting's celebrated pupils, and John Pintard was his best Latin scholar. The latter writes in his autobiography: "Mr. Cutting was an indifferent preacher, but an excellent schoolmaster. Teaching in his time was conducted by copious flogging. We were flogged if we deserved it, and flogged lest we should want it, but he made excellent scholars. I boarded in the family of Mr. Cutting. The diet consisted chiefly of clam broth, five clams or two Indian dumplings. We were allowed six-pence per week pocket money. This we husbanded until we went to Oyster Bay, when we bought something good for supper. On one occasion Dr. Cooper, President of Kings (now Columbia) College, came on a visit, remaining until the following day. As usual we had bought a fine turkey for two shillings, picked it clean, and Nancy, the cook, stuffed it and gave us bread and butter with boiled potatoes, also loaning us a dripping-pan. Instead of going to bed we assembled in the school-room, and strung up our turkey to roast over the fire. President Cooper was about retiring, but hearing a racket below at that late hour, noiselessly glided into the school-room, and we seven retreated through the side



door. When all was quiet we returned to our turkey, conscious of being detected and being certain of a severe castigation when Mr. Cutting should be informed of our crime. At breakfast the next morning, the President and Mr. Cutting sat at the principal table, while we sat at ours, with no pleasant feelings. It happened that I sat directly opposite Dr. Cooper, afraid to look up. At length he caught my eye, and put his finger to his nose as much as to say "Mum;" this restored confidence, and we ate our breakfast more cheerfully. The President was true to his promise, and returned to New York without exposing us, knowing it was but a school-boys' prank. I always," adds Pintard, "respected Dr. Cooper from that time." The surprising statement is made that when school vacations occurred, it was the custom of John Pintard to walk from Hempstead to Brooklyn, taking the Fulton Ferry to this city, and then proceeding up the old Bowery Road on foot to his uncle's residence at New Rochelle! Lewis Pintard was a liberal and rich man, but he believed that such long tramps were a physical benefit to the boy, who certainly became a strong and well-developed man physically, as well as mentally.

At the early age of thirteen, the precocious young scholar entered Princeton, being presented to President Witherspoon by Richard Stockton. Among his college friends and classmates were such distinguished characters as James A. Bayard,



Gunning Bedford, Jonathan Dayton, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Brockholst Livingston, and James Madison, fourth President of the United States. Although the youngest of his class, Pintard was among its best scholars, and always a favorite with Dr. Witherspoon. He writes: "Towards the close of my college career at Princeton during the eventful year, 1776, my mind was thoroughly imbued with the principles of Liberty. The example of Dr. Witherspoon gave a tone to the students, myself in particular." At this time almost the entire college was ready to enlist, and Pintard marched with the first Company, commanded by William C. Houston, Professor of Mathematics. Previous to this, for several months, Pintard had daily drilled his fellow-students and others, having acquired the ability to do so, by carefully observing the practice of the British soldiery in his native city. He frequently rose before daylight and walked several miles to drill militia companies, returning in season for morning prayers. After some months' service, the young soldier returned to college to receive his degree, and then proceeded to his uncle's residence at New Rochelle. At Elizabeth, Elias Boudinot had given John a note to Joseph Reed in command at Fort Washington. On presenting his introduction, the General gave him a pass to cross King's Bridge, with his two classmates, Theodorus Bailey and Chauncey Graham. It read: "Permit Mr. Pintard and suite to pass King's Bridge." Neither

the sergeant nor any of his squad knew what *suite* meant, until informed by Pintard, that it meant his comrades, and they were then permitted to cross into Westchester County. Mr. Pintard having accepted the office of Commissary for the prisoners in New York City he appointed his nephew, deputy, and for four years he performed almost all the duties of the position. Mr. Pintard, of course, was at liberty to visit all parts of the city. On one occasion he was in Hanover Square, when his attention was called by whispers not loud, but deep: "See the traitor General!" It was Benedict Arnold, coming on some business from Sir Henry Clinton at the Battery to General Robertson, then in command of the city. After a brief interview Robertson requested his aid, Captain Murray, to show General Arnold, recently arrived, some of the sights of New York, which the spirited young staff officer declined to do, saying: "Sir, His Majesty never honored me with his commission to become gentleman usher to a traitor."

When released from this office, after several years' service, and from witnessing the constant outrages against American prisoners, he was helpless to prevent, and which are too painful to dwell upon, John Pintard proceeded to Paramus, New Jersey, the residence of Abraham Brasher, a distant connection, and a member of the New York Provincial Congress. The result of this visit, was an engagement to Eliza Brasher. Five

years later they were married, and the tradition is that no handsomer couple were to be seen in New York. This statement is fully confirmed by their miniatures painted in 1787 by Ramage, a celebrated artist of that period. Mr. Pintard writes of his young wife: "She was classed among the greatest beauties of New York, and her miniature is as much like her in my estimation, as a painting well could be." Pintard joined his uncle Lewis, who continued his business which rapidly increased on the return of Peace, and soon after his marriage began business for himself at No. 12 Wall Street. He engaged in the East India trade, and before he was twenty-seven, was the owner of several ships, including the "Belgiosa" and "Jay." In 1788, he became an Alderman, was re-elected and in 1790 Pintard was elected to the Legislature, which then met in this city; acted as translator of French for the Government, and was the happy father of two fair daughters, who became the wives of Dr. Davidson, of New Orleans, and Thomas L. Servoss, a successful New York merchant. These were golden days for John Pintard. He was prosperous in business, popular with the public, and a favorite in the best society of the city, which was then the seat of government. His name heads the list of



*John Pintard*

*From miniature by Ramage*

sachems elected in April, 1791, to the St. Tammany Society, and a month later he became Grand Sachem with his friend, DeWitt Clinton, Scribe of the Council. At this time, a document was issued headed, "American Museum under the patronage of the St. Tammany Society, or Columbian order." The Corporation granted an apartment in the City Hall for its use, to be open every Friday and Saturday. "Any article sent on those days to Mr. John Pintard, No. 57, King Street, will be thankfully received." He was the Secretary and Gardner Baker the Custodian. The Museum prospered for many years, until, in 1808, it became the property of the Custodian, and was called Baker's American Museum. A few years later he sold the collection to John Scudder, the predecessor of the renowned showman P. T. Barnum, and it became widely known as Scudder's American Museum. It was in the rooms facing Broadway, of the old Alms House, situated in the rear of the City Hall, and from the balcony was daily heard the blare of military music celebrated in Fitz-Greene Halleck's poem of "Fanny":

"'Twas Yankee Doodle played by Scudder's band."

Early in Washington's first administration Pintard and his uncle Elias Boudinot, dined with the President at No. 1, Cherry Street, now marked by a tablet attached to one of the columns of the Brooklyn Bridge, to mark the exact site of Washington's



house. He was aware that the making and receiving of calls on New Year's day was an ancient Dutch custom, brought over to the New World from Holland. The President enjoyed it, and he determined to encourage, by his example, the observance of the custom. All the leading citizens, irrespective of politics, called upon General and Mrs. Washington, and in the evening they held a reception. He informed Boudinot and Pintard that he was delighted. "I have experienced," said the President, "the most intense satisfaction in observing this good old Dutch custom. I am apprehensive that in time it will be laid aside and rooted out, owing to the immense number of persons who will come to New York on account of its favorable situation, who will have no sympathy with this time-honored custom and ceremony." Perhaps I may be permitted to express my sympathy for those in this audience who are too young to have enjoyed the delights of New York on New Year's day, before the pleasant practice that General Washington praised, was perhaps, necessarily abandoned, and chiefly, for the reasons assigned by our illustrious first President.

Among the earliest of Mr. Pintard's projects was a scheme for establishing American manufactures in New York, with the object of benefiting the city and the shareholders, but chiefly with the philanthropic purpose of giving employment to the poor, large numbers of whom were then (1789),



vainly seeking work. There is a little book in which may be seen in our founder's handwriting, the following lines: "New York, Feby 2nd, 1789. We the subscribers do hereby promise to take the number of shares annexed to our names for establishing manufactories in this city upon such plan as may be agreed on—each share to be Ten pounds. The money to be paid immediately after the Society is organized. A meeting to be called for that purpose as soon as fifty shares are subscribed. Among the two hundred and forty-six signers obtained by Mr. Pintard, who subscribe for three hundred and eighty shares, are included almost all the principal citizens of New York. Of these I may mention John Alsop, Robert Benson, Gerard Bancker, Samuel Bard, George Clinton, Matthew Clarkson, Coster Brothers, John and Nicholas Cruger, George Douglas, John Delafield, William Duer, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, William Irving, John and Isaac Roosevelt (ancestor of the President), James Renwick, Hugh Gaine and James Rivington, Nicholas Fish, Dominick Lynch, Baron Steuben, Alexander Robertson, William Seton, Melancton Smith, Peter Stuyvesant, Richard Varick, John Watts, Charles Wilks, and Anthony Walton White. The Association was incorporated March 16, 1790. The act states that the Society is incorporated in part for the employment of the honest industrious poor. The business of spinning and weaving was carried on for several years in

Vesey Street, but not meeting the expectations of the shareholders was discontinued. Among the subscribers was Ananias Cooper, M.D., of No 43, Dock Street. Why the unfortunate Doctor should have been afflicted with such an extraordinary name it is impossible to imagine, unless his parents were unbelievers.

A similar company was organized by John Pintard in an adjoining state, two years later, in which his uncle Elias Boudinot was among the largest shareholders. It was incorporated with an exchequer of \$1,000,000, for the purpose of manufacturing cotton cloth in the present capital of Passaic county, New Jersey, and was named Paterson, in honor of Judge William Paterson of New Brunswick. The associates of Boudinot were Col. John Bayard, William Duer, Alexander Hamilton, Archibald Mercer, Col. John Neilson, Gen. Philip Schuyler and other prominent gentlemen. Like the New York movement, it was found to be premature, and was abandoned in 1796. When it began in 1791, there were ten dwellings and a small church: to-day Paterson is a busy city of nearly seventy thousand inhabitants. Almost half that number are engaged in the manufacture of silk, so that it may properly be called the Lyons of America.

In 1792, William Duer's failure, caused by the carrying out of Alexander Hamilton's scheme for funding the National debt, caused the ruin of his friend John Pintard, who had endorsed his notes

for nearly a million of dollars, so absolute was his confidence in the financial ability and integrity of Duer, with whom he was on terms of closest intimacy. Pintard surrendered all his possessions—ships, cargoes, houses, everything, and removed to Newark, being one of the commissioners appointed to erect bridges over the Hackensack and Passaic rivers, and also to survey the country between Jersey City and Newark. Duer's creditors were merciless. They pursued Pintard into New Jersey and incarcerated him for thirteen months, in the Newark prison for Duer's debts. While confined, he studied law, later passing a successful examination, but abandoned the profession, finding that his excessive modesty was an obstacle to success as a public speaker. Halleck, who always talked French with him, told me that Pintard was a charming conversationalist, so that it seems surprising that he should fail from such a cause. In 1800, John Pintard, having previously returned to New York, availed himself of the general bankrupt law of the United States, and again engaged in business, but sad to say, William Duer died within the prison limits in 1799. His wife was known as Lady Kitty Duer, and their sons were William Alexander, President of Columbia College, and John, Chief Justice of the Superior Court of New York.

In 1800, Lewis Pintard purchased "The Daily Advertiser," presenting one quarter to his nephew, and another quarter to his son-in-law, Samuel Bay-

ard, but this position as an editor Pintard relinquished during the following year, and decided to visit New Orleans, not then annexed to the United States, with a possible view of establishing himself in that city. Before sailing in the brig Dyett, for Louisiana, Mr. Pintard passed a week in Washington, dining with President Jefferson, and meeting several members of his Cabinet, including Gallatin and Madison, with whom he was well acquainted. Jefferson he had known when he was serving as Secretary of State in Washington's first administration, and residing at No. 57 Maiden Lane. My own impression is that Pintard went to the South as a representative of the Government, for during his residence there of about three months, he was occupied in examining the adjacent country, and making a critical study of its resources. In May, 1801, Pintard sailed from New Orleans for Havana, where he spent a month, and then took ship for New York, arriving early in July, and immediately proceeded to Washington. After the acquisition of the country we find Mr. Pintard writing to Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury: "The following recapitulation of the subject of our conversation yesterday respecting New Orleans, may possibly serve to elucidate the object of your inquiries. The want of notes made during my visit in 1801 prevent more ample details. A reasonable allowance must be made for the inaccuracy to which the judgment of all travellers is more or less subject. It is my



wish to be perfectly correct in a communication intended to inform a minister of Government. Such ideas as respect the future government of this important acquisition to our Empire, you will be pleased to accept as the sentiments of an individual actuated by an honest zeal for the integrity and prosperity of our general Government." This, with other extracts and facts that might be presented did time permit, would seem to show that, as a private citizen, John Pintard contributed in some measure to the purchase of Louisiana, an act which shed so much lustre on the administration of Thomas Jefferson.<sup>1</sup> An eminent writer says: "Mr. Pintard's valuable and exact information concerning the colony of Louisiana was beyond doubt the most important consideration submitted to the authorities, and the one that led to its purchase."

In 1804, John Pintard was appointed Clerk to the Corporation of New York and City Inspector. His office was in the City Hall, then at the corner of Nassau and Wall Streets, where the Sub-Treasury now stands with its noble statue of Washington, placed on the spot where he took the oath of office as our first President. Dr. John W. Francis said, "Examine for yourself the record of the office of City Inspector and learn the many obstacles that Pintard encountered to establish the

<sup>1</sup> Edward Everett Hale, in his interesting "Memoirs of a Hundred Years," expresses the opinion that President Jefferson "was dragged against his will into the purchase of Louisiana," for which France was paid the sum of \$15,000,000.



department of the city institution for the registry of births and deaths." He held this office for five years and then resigned, being succeeded by Gen. Jacob Morton in 1810, who became both Clerk of the Corporation and City Inspector, as Mr. Pintard had been.

Our city possesses few more valuable public institutions than the New York Historical Society, founded by John Pintard in 1804. From its formation in the Picture Room of the City Hall, he always displayed the deepest interest in its success. At that meeting held November 20th, ninety-seven years ago, there were present John Pintard, Samuel Bayard, De Witt Clinton, Egbert Benson, Dr. David Hosack, Anthony Bleecker, Peter Stuyvesant and four distinguished clergymen, Drs. John N. Abeel, William Linn, John Mason and Samuel Miller. The eleven gentlemen "agreed to form themselves into a Society, the principal design of which should be to collect and preserve whatsoever may relate to the natural, civil, or ecclesiastical History of the United States in general, and of this State in particular," and appointed Messrs. Benson, Pintard, and Dr. Miller, a committee to prepare and report a draft of a constitution at a meeting to be held on December 10th. It was further agreed that this organization should be called the "New York Historical Society." Pintard's influence secured rooms for its use adjoining his own office in the City Hall, and

during five years that he and the society remained there he was untiring in his efforts to advance its prosperity in every possible manner. He secured members among his many friends, and not only used his powers of persuasion by pen and voice, to induce others to present pictures, manuscripts, medals, coins, books, and antiquities, but was a most generous giver himself. Among his many gifts at this early period, as well as later, were two of the Society's literary treasures, a perfect copy of Eliot's Indian Bible, being the first Bible printed in the New World. This highly prized quarto, of which there are but about one hundred copies known of the editions of 1663 and 1685, is eagerly sought for by collectors of Americana, copies of 1663 having been sold for more than a thousand dollars. Pintard's other precious gift was Bradford's early map of New York City of which but one other copy is known, and for that, its owner recently refused an offer of \$2,500. Both these interesting memorials of the founder's liberality containing his autograph and the date, 1807, may be seen in the showcases of the Library, with many other interesting manuscripts, miniatures, maps, and books. Not a few of the latter contain his book-plate engraved by Anderson. Our founder also presented to the Society, in 1817, an admirable oil painting of his friend Gov. John Jay, executed by the artist Joseph Wright. Not only was Mr. Pintard the founder of this society, but he was the Father

of American Historical Societies, for the first one established in Massachusetts admittedly owes its birth to the philanthropic gentleman, properly styled by dear old Dr. John W. Francis, "our enlightened founder," who for two score years continued to exert himself in behalf of its best interests. In the early portion of this period, John Pintard was the Recording Secretary and Librarian. In fact, he was during its first decade, as I heard Gulian C. Verplanck say, "the one person chiefly instrumental in continuing its existence, and ultimately making the Society a success."

Another ancient New York institution in which Mr. Pintard was interested is the Society Library, of which he was for a decade a Trustee. In the early years of the nineteenth century, at a period when its exchequer was not in a prosperous condition, he drew up a subscription paper, put down his own name for a modest amount, and in a few days succeeded in raising several thousand dollars, thus relieving the Society of its financial difficulties. The interesting document has unfortunately been mislaid, but my impression is that I remember the signatures of Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Robert Lenox, Nicholas Fish, Gillian Verplanck, and other prominent citizens, with all of whom Mr. Pintard was well acquainted. It may be doubted if among his New York contemporaries, his equal could be found, for persuading people to part with their money, for Pintard pos-

sessed an intuitive knowledge of every man's weak point, and the power of reaching it. For organizing societies and meetings he had a perfect genius. Few public institutions were established in his day without his aid and co-operation. Remaining in the background himself, or only appearing in the modest rôle of Secretary, Pintard was in reality very generally the real leader of the movement. If a prominent personage was required to preside at a meeting, or to place his name on a paper for any purpose, he could always call on his intimate friend, DeWitt Clinton, who entertained the most perfect confidence in John Pintard.

In February, 1805, Mr. Pintard and a few friends inaugurated the movement that led to the Free School system, which has resulted so magnificently in our metropolis. Second on the list of subscribers of sums varying from five dollars up to five thousand stands the name of John Pintard. It would have gladdened his heart could he have witnessed the scores of noble public schools now to be seen in New York. Two years later, our Founder gave his attention to the subject of improving the upper portion of the city, resulting in the appointment of three prominent citizens as Commissioners of roads and streets in Manhattan, who established the present admirable system of avenues and streets existing in New York. It was also John Pintard's influence that led to the change of names of streets in the old part of the city,



dropping King, Queen, Princess, Duke, and other similar designations then existing, for others more appropriate to the metropolis of a great Republic.

In 1809, Mr. Pintard was appointed Secretary of the Mutual Fire Assurance Company, of which Robert Lenox was then President. The offices were at 52 Wall Street. He continued to act as Secretary of the Company for twenty years, and after his resignation he was continued as a director with the free use of a desk as long as he lived. When, in 1810, his friends Stephen Allen, Matthew L. Davis, George Furman, George Ireland, and John Slidell, obtained a charter for the Mechanic's Bank, it was their unanimous wish that John Pintard should become cashier of the new organization. For reasons that do not appear in any of his papers, and are unknown to his family, he declined the position, preferring to remain with the Insurance Company. During the second war with Great Britain the Corporation appointed Mr. Pintard to sign and issue all the fractional currency required as a substitute for small change which was then extremely scarce. Examples of the paper money bearing his name are included in the collections of the society. Mr. Pintard was manager of lotteries in New York in the days when they were fashionable, and it is confidently believed that Columbia University received the grant of twenty acres for a Botanic Garden by his intervention, and the assistance of DeWitt Clinton and David Hosack.



We next catch a glimpse of John Pintard persuading his kinsman Elias Boudinot, once President of the old Congress, to contribute ten thousand dollars to aid in the establishment of the American Bible Society, which was founded in this city in May, 1816. Among his active associates were William Jay, Samuel Bayard, and the Rev. Drs. Mason, Morse, Nott, and Beecher, father of Henry Ward. Boudinot became President, with Pintard, as usual, Secretary. For twelve years he was one of the Vice-Presidents. Among the many portraits of the various Presidents and other prominent officials of the Bible Society, there is to be seen in the Managers Hall, a fine oil painting of Mr. Pintard. From 1819 to 1829, he was Secretary of the New York Chamber of Commerce, and it was principally through his untiring efforts that that body was so successfully re-established after the war. For a period of four years, John Pintard was Secretary of the Sailors Snug Harbor and, chiefly through his instrumentality, the fine property was purchased on Staten Island, where the admirable home is now situated.

Almost a century ago our friend foresaw with prophetic vision, the future grandeur of his native city. Before me I have a statistical statement, as printed by Mr. Pintard on a somewhat faded slip of paper, which reads as follows:—

“By the enumeration of the inhabitants of this city recently published, the progress of population for the last

five years appears to be at the rate of 25 per cent. Should our city continue to increase in the same proportion during the present century, the aggregate number, at its close, will far exceed that of any other city in the Old World, Pekin not excepted: as will appear from the following table.

*Progress of Population in the city of New-York, computed at the rate of 25 per cent every five years.*

1805	75,770	1840	361,293	1875	1,722,776
1810	94,715	1845	451,616	1880	2,153,470
1815	110,390	1850	564,520	1885	2,691,837
1820	147,987	1855	705,650	1890	3,364,796
1825	184,943	1860	882,062	1895	4,205,995
1830	231,228	1865	1,102,577	1900	5,257,493
1835	289,035	1870	1,378,221		

“From this table it appears, that the population of this city, sixty years hence, will considerably exceed the reputed population of the cities of Paris and London. Cities and nations, however, like individuals, experience their rise, progress, and decline. It is hardly probable that New York will be so highly favoured as to prove an exception. Wars, pestilence, and political convulsions, must be our lot, and be taken into calculation. With every allowance, however, for the “numerous ills which life is heir to,” from our advantageous maritime situation, and the increase of agriculture and commerce, our numbers will in all probability, at the end of this century, exceed those of any other city in the world, Pekin alone excepted.

“From the data here furnished, the politician, financier, and above all the speculator in town-lots (a subject, to our shame be it spoken, which absorbs every generous passion), may draw various and interesting inferences.”

When the friends of the Erie Canal almost despaired of success for their great project DeWitt Clinton called on Pintard for aid. The grand undertaking was drooping and, very generally, deemed dead. He promptly responded to his friend's ap-

peal, called a large meeting of citizens, the success of which was so great, that the Legislature almost immediately passed a law appointing a Board of Commissioners to lay out the route of the Canal, and Clinton was chosen President. In 1825 the Erie Canal was completed, and the plans for the stupendous celebration that followed soon after, were all prepared by John Pintard. He was the bearer of the bottle of Lake Erie water that was emptied into the Atlantic, as an emblem of the union of the great inland sea with the still greater ocean. Colonel Stone, the editor of the "Commercial Advertiser," a zealous champion of the important undertaking, wrote an interesting narrative of the Erie Canal celebration.

The first Savings Bank in the United States was established in this city by the sagacity of John Pintard. It was known as the New York Bank for Savings. Pintard was President, with Peter Augustus Jay and Philip Hone as first and second vice-presidents. DeWitt Clinton headed the list of directors. The deposits during the first six months in the year 1819 amounted to \$153,378, representing 1,527 depositors. Mr. Pintard was President of the Institution until his resignation in 1841, being then four-score and two years of age, and stricken with blindness. This affliction, like his failure in 1792, he bore uncomplainingly, and with Christian resignation.

From 1790 until almost the close of his long and

honorable career, there were few enterprises connected with our city that John Pintard did not promote by his pen and purse. He was one of the chief supporters of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church, devising means for its removal from New Haven to this city, and when that was successfully accomplished, presenting the Institution with a large number of books, including many extremely valuable works. Mr. Pintard persuaded Jacob Sherrard, a member of the Dutch Church, to make the Seminary his "residency legatee," by which it was benefited to the extent of sixty thousand dollars, and also secured twenty-five thousand from George Lorillard. He also served the Seminary for several years as Librarian. In 1885, Pintard Hall, one of the dormitories of the Seminary, was erected and named in his honor.

Few persons of his day possessed Mr. Pintard's ability in penning a persuasive letter that would bring back a cheque for some worthy charity, or an address in behalf of some excellent Institution, or a handbill that would arouse the public in aid of some good work. He published an account of New Orleans, in the *New York Medical Repository*: a monograph on Philip Freneau in the *New York Mirror*: contributed articles to *Delaplaine's Repository* and other periodicals: left numerous Diaries, and translated the Book of Common Prayer into French for the Huguenot Church—



L'Eglise du Saint Esprit—in New York City, of which he was a vestryman for thirty-four years. This version is still in use here and elsewhere. Mr. Pintard, the philanthropist and scholar, was also an enthusiastic antiquarian. In his address before this Society in 1857, Dr. John W. Francis said, “Until the career of our founder commenced, there was little antiquarian zeal among us. He was universally consulted by individuals, of almost every order, for information touching this State’s transactions, and the multifarious occurrences of this city which have marked its progress since our Revolutionary struggle.” With many of the prominent actors on both sides in that great struggle, Pintard was acquainted. During the years that he was representing his uncle Lewis as Commissary of Prisoners in New York, he had many interviews with Sir Henry Clinton, General Robertson, and other British officers of high rank: had conversed with Major André concerning their Huguenot ancestry, and was acquainted with many of the Americans who took part in the seven years war, who were his idols. He knew Washington, Jefferson and Madison, as has been already shown, and enjoyed more or less intimacy with Hamilton, Jay, Burr, George and DeWitt Clinton, Baron Steuben and Rufus King, as well as Colonels Fish, Trumbull, and Willett.

Among the last of those who may be said to have known Mr. Pintard intimately was Colonel



Andrew Warner for half a century, a well remembered official of this Society. In his later years, while acting as Recording Secretary, a friend inquired where he learned to be so accurate and businesslike, and the Colonel promptly replied, "In John Pintard's office." At the same time, in speaking of him, he recalled the circumstance of so many old soldiers, of both the first and second wars with Great Britain, coming to his office for pecuniary aid, or assistance in obtaining their pension-money, which Mr. Pintard never refused, and he told of his voice being raised against the destruction of the noble maples, sycamores, walnuts, and willows, which constituted the woodland of the Park, ruthlessly cut down to permit the populace to enjoy an unobstructed view of the marble façade of the new City Hall.

Pintard might say of almost all the commercial, charitable, educational, and literary movements occurring in his native city between 1790 and 1840, "a large part of these I have been." He was not a conservative who feared the new, but was among those progressive men who led in stoutly advocating, both with pen and voice, advancing, improving. Pintard was one of the truly representative men who contributed largely to make New York the great metropolis of the western world. His memory and works should be a precious heritage.

"A most incomparable man ; breath'd as it were,  
To an untirable and continue goodness."

Like his illustrious friend George Washington, John Pintard was a victim to the extraordinary medical practice of their periods. A grandson present in this audience, remembers the distinguished physician and a popular member of this society, being sent for to attend the venerable man enfeebled by the infirmities of more than four score years, who bled his patient as he sat in his arm-chair. After about a pint of blood had been taken from him, Mr. Pintard closed his sightless eyes, and passed peacefully away to another world. This was on Friday, June 21, 1844, and a few days later he was laid with three generations of his kindred in the family vault in St. Clement's Church, to which he had removed them from the old French burial-ground in Pine Street.

Of all men who have actively and unselfishly exerted themselves in behalf of the best interests of the City of New York, I know none who have surpassed John Pintard. His labors continued uninterruptedly for about half a century, for he early learned the luxury of doing good: it was his daily delight. The assertion is frequently heard that republics are ungrateful. May not the same statement be made in regard to cities? New York has done nothing to perpetuate the memory of John Pintard, no, not even named a street in his honor. In this Society's upper hall may be seen a John Pintard bronze medal made in his honor, as its founder; the portrait painted in 1816 by John

Trumbull, which has been recently copied for the General Theological Seminary, among whose buildings in Chelsea Square is one known as Pintard Hall, and in the Managers' room of the American Bible Society hangs a portrait of Vice-President Pintard. These are, so far as I am aware, the only memorials of the philanthropist. Mr. President, when the stately home fronting on the Central Park is completed for the New York Historical Society, may we not trust that the first object which will meet the visitor's eyes, as he enters its wide portal, will be a marble statue of its founder?









# TO THE PUBLIC.

## THE ADDRESS OF THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

HAVING formed an association, which has since been incorporated, for the purpose of discovering, procuring and preserving whatever may relate to the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of our country, and particularly of the state of New-York, we solicit the aid of the liberal, patriotic and learned, to promote the objects of our institution.

The utility of Societies for the advancement of science, has been so fully proved by the experience of the most enlightened nations of Europe, and by that of our own country, that there can be no need, at this time, of any formal arguments in support of their claim to public patronage. But it may be observed, that, in this state, if we except the Agricultural Society, there is no association for the purposes of general knowledge; and the want of a regular, minute, and authentic History of New-York, renders the combined efforts of individuals for that object more peculiarly necessary.

It is well known that many valuable manuscripts and papers relative to the history of our country remain in the possession of those who, though unwilling to entrust them to a single person, yet would cheerfully confide them to a public institution, in whose custody they would be preserved for the general benefit of society. To rescue from the dust and obscurity of private repositories such important documents, as are liable to be lost or destroyed, by the indifference or neglect of those into whose hands they may have fallen, will be a primary object of our attention.

The number of materials and the extreme dif-

ference to general instruction. As soon as our collection shall be sufficient to form a volume, and the funds of the Society will admit, we shall commence publication, that we may better secure our treasures by means of the press, from the corruptions of time and the power of accident.

That this object may be sooner and more effectually attained, we request that all who feel disposed to encourage our design will transmit, as soon as convenient, to the Society—

Manuscripts, Records, Pamphlets, and Books relative to the History of this Country, and particularly to the points of inquiry subjoined.

Orations, Sermons, Essays, Discourses, Poems and Tracts; delivered, written, or published on any public occasion, or which concern any public transaction, or remarkable character or event.

Laws, Journals, Copies of Records and Proceedings of Congresses, Legislatures, General Assemblies, Conventions, Committees of Safety, Secret Committees for General Objects, Treaties and Negotiations with any Indian Tribes, or with any State or Nation.

Proceedings of Ecclesiastical Conventions, Synods, General Assemblies, Presbyteries, and Societies of all denominations of Christians.

Narratives of Missionaries, and proceedings of Missionary Societies.

Narratives of Indian Wars, Battles and Exploits; of the Adventures and Sufferings of Captives, Voyagers and Travellers.

Minutes and proceedings of Societies for the abolition of Slavery, and the transactions of Societies for Political, Literary, and Scientific purposes.

settlement and colonial transactions of this State, can be fully perceived by those only who have meditated on the design of erecting an historical monument of those events, and have calculated the nature and amount of their resources : For without the aid of original records and authentic documents, history will be nothing more than a well-combined series of ingenious conjectures and amusing fables. The cause of truth is interesting to all men, and those who possess the means, however small, of preventing error, or of elucidating obscure facts, will confer a benefit on mankind by communicating them to the world.

Not aspiring to the higher walks of general science, we shall confine the range of our exertions to the humble task of collecting and preserving whatever may be useful to others in the different branches of historical inquiry. We feel encouraged to follow this path by the honourable example of the Massachusetts Society, whose labours will abridge those of the future historian, and furnish a thousand lights to guide him through the dubious track of unrecorded time. Without aiming to be rivals, we shall be happy to co-operate with that laudable institution in pursuing the objects of our common researches ; satisfied if, in the end, our efforts shall be attended with equal success.

Our inquiries are not limited to a single State, or district, but extend to the whole Continent ; and it will be our business to diffuse the information we may collect in such manner as will best

and Schools ; their origin, progress and present state.

Topographical descriptions of Cities, Towns, Counties and Districts, at various periods, with Maps, and whatever relates to the progressive Geography of the Country.

Statistical Tables—Tables of Diseases, Births, and Deaths, and of Population ; of Meteorological Observations and facts relating to Climate.

Accounts of Exports and Imports at various periods, and of the progress of Manufactures and Commerce.

Magazines, Reviews, Newspapers, and other Periodical Publications, particularly such as appeared antecedent to the year 1783.

Biographical Memoirs and Anecdotes of eminent and remarkable persons in America, or who have been connected with its settlement or History.

Original Essays and Disquisitions on the Natural, Civil, Literary, or Ecclesiastical History of any State, City, Town or District.

As the Society intend to form a Library and Cabinet, they will gratefully receive specimens of the various productions of the American Continent and of the adjacent Islands, and such animal, vegetable and mineral subjects as may be deemed worthy of preservation. Donations also of rare and useful books and pamphlets, relative to the above objects, will be thankfully accepted, and all communications duly noticed in the publications of the Society.

JOHN PINTARD, Recording Secy.

*September 15th, 1809.*













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An Address delivered before the New  
York Historical Society Dec. 3, 1901  
by James G. Wilson.

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